



Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation

Report on the Assessment of Government Evaluations

Evaluation Title:	Independent Design Assessment of the Energy Research Development and Innovation (ERD&I) Strategy
Evaluation Number:	408
Evaluation Completion Date:	02 July 2012
Period of Evaluation:	March 2012 - July 2012
Submitted:	29 January 2014 by Cathy Chames
Approved:	03 February 2014 by Mike Leslie

Evaluation Details

Evaluation Title:	Independent Design Assessment of the Energy Research Development and Innovation (ERD&I) Strategy
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Evaluation Completion Date:	02 July 2012
Created:	26 November 2013 by Mike Leslie
Submitted:	29 January 2014 by Cathy Chames
Approved:	03 February 2014 by Mike Leslie
Period of Evaluation:	March 2012 - July 2012
Known Cost:	R 472,146.00
Known Cost Type:	Referenced
Initiated By:	Department of Science and Technology
Initiated By Internal:	Yes
Undertaken By:	The Green House and DNA Economics
Undertaken By Internal:	No

Assessors

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Assessment Documents

Document Name:	Document Type:	Added By:	Added On:
Approved 11045 ERDI Evaluation Report.pdf	Evaluation report	Mike Leslie	26 November 2013
doc201111070935451.pdf	Terms of Reference (ToR) for the evaluation	Cathy Chames	05 December 2013
ERDI project proposal.pdf	The proposal selected to conduct the evaluation	Cathy Chames	05 December 2013
ERDI 11045 - Inception report.pdf	An inception report	Cathy Chames	05 December 2013
Assessment Report at Moderation.pdf	Assessment Report at Moderation	Mike Leslie	28 January 2014

Quality Assessment Summary

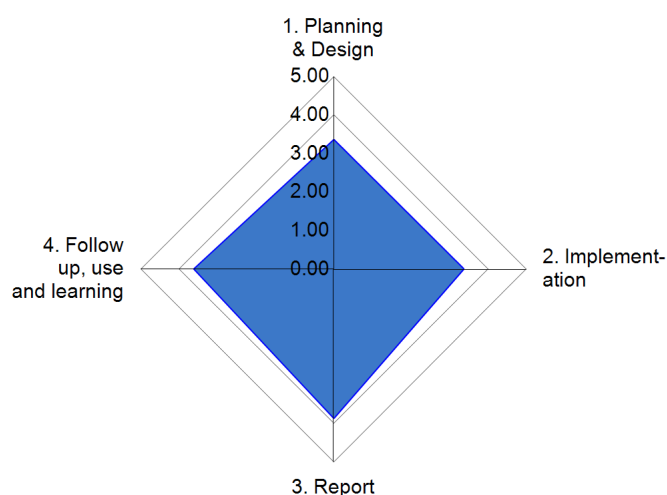
The report has an overall score of 3.62 with the reporting phase of the study scoring the highest owing particularly to its accessible content, good structure and strength of conclusions. The planning and design phase scored the lowest at 3.37 with the main issue being the quality of the TOR which had some significant gaps; and the poorly planned process for using the findings of the evaluation. On the other hand, the planned methodology was a particular strength of this phase scoring a 5. The main reason here is that the study design included the development of an assessment framework against which to assess the analytical soundness of the ERD&I strategy. Given the paucity of design evaluations conducted in South Africa, this framework could be replicated and utilised for other similar studies. The implementation phase scored 3.38. Evaluation ethics and independence were adhered to throughout this phase (4) and there was good methodological integrity (3.44) which contributed to the high scores for the cross-cutting considerations in the areas of free and open evaluation process (3.74) and evaluation ethics (4). The score here was boosted by the data analysis approach and methods used where a unique and innovative approach was used to fulfil the purpose of the evaluation. However, M&E skills development received a low score (2) because this study could have been used as a good opportunity to build capacity of the DST staff who could have learned from the experience of conducting a design evaluation. This contributed to the overall score of 2 for the cross-cutting consideration of capacity development. The score for the follow-up, use and learning phase was 3.63 with a good score of 4 for resource utilisation. A major success here is that the DST has decided to re-design the ERD&I strategy based on the evaluation recommendations.

Quality Assessment Scores

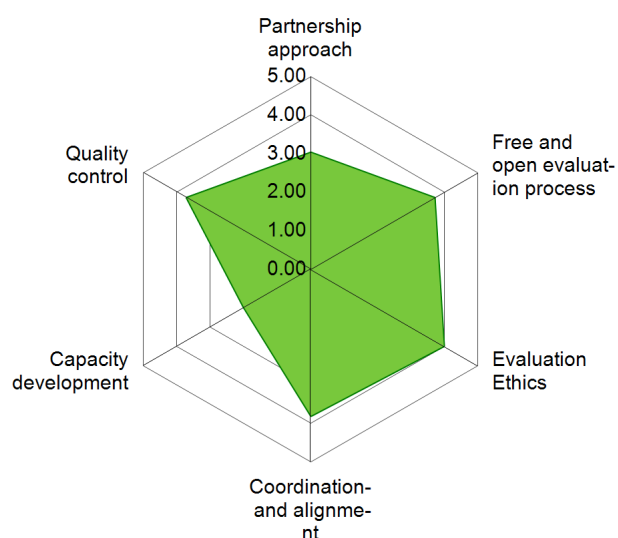
Phase of Evaluation	Score
1. Planning & Design	3.37
2. Implementation	3.38
3. Report	3.86
4. Follow-up, use and learning	3.63
Total	3.62

Overarching Consideration	Score
Partnership approach	3.03
Free and open evaluation process	3.74
Evaluation Ethics	4.00
Coordination and alignment	3.83
Capacity development	2.00
Quality control	3.72
Total	3.62

Scores: Phases of Evaluation



Scores: Overarching Considerations



Phase of Evaluation	Area of Evaluation	Score
1. Planning & Design	1.1. Quality of the TOR	2.50
1. Planning & Design	1.2. Adequacy of resourcing	4.00
1. Planning & Design	1.3. Alignment to policy context and background literature	4.00
1. Planning & Design	1.4. Appropriateness of the evaluation design and methodology	3.89
1. Planning & Design	1.5. Project management (Planning phase)	4.00
2. Implementation	2.1. Evaluation ethics and independence	4.00
2. Implementation	2.2. Participation and M&E skills development	2.50
2. Implementation	2.3. Methodological integrity	3.44
2. Implementation	2.4. Project management (Implementation phase)	4.00
3. Report	3.1. Completeness of reporting structure	3.96
3. Report	3.2. Accessibility of content	4.47
3. Report	3.3. Robustness of findings	3.77
3. Report	3.4. Strength of conclusions	4.00
3. Report	3.5. Suitability of recommendations	3.54
3. Report	3.6. Consideration of reporting risks and ethical implications	3.77
3. Report	3.7. Project management (Reporting phase)	1.00
4. Follow-up, use and learning	4.1. Resource utilisation	4.00
4. Follow-up, use and learning	4.2. Evaluation use	3.50
Total	Total	3.62

1. Planning & Design

1.1. Quality of the TOR

Standard:	1.1.1. The evaluation was guided by a well-structured and complete TOR or a well-structured and complete internal evaluation proposal
Comment and Analysis:	The TOR is well-structured and contains details for all the necessary aspects: purpose, background, objectives, scope and focus, methodology, nature of consultancy, assessment team and time frames. It was also noted by interviewees that the Theory of Change was not clearly defined in the TOR.
Rating:	3
Standard:	1.1.2. The purpose of the evaluation stated in the TOR (or an internal evaluation proposal) was clear and explicit
Comment and Analysis:	When compared with the scope of the task, the initial stated purpose of the evaluation is not clear - "to assist the DST in fulfilling its implementation responsibilities by evaluating the EGCs alignment with and contribution towards the strategic thrust of the TYIP". It does not explicitly mention that the focus of the task will be on the Draft Energy Research, Development and Innovation Strategy (ERD&I) - this is mentioned later on in the document.
Rating:	2
Standard:	1.1.3. The evaluation questions in the TOR (or an internal evaluation proposal) were clearly stated and appropriate for addressing the evaluation purpose
Comment and Analysis:	Three basic evaluation questions are posed in the TOR under the 'scope and focus' of the task. Whilst they are clearly stated, they are broad. For example one of the questions posed is: "Is the initiative specific and complete enough for an evaluator to track its progress in credible and useful ways?" More detailed and specific questions would have been appropriate for addressing the evaluation purpose. For example one interviewee noted that there should have been more specific questions asking into the appropriateness of the Theory of Change of the intervention.
Rating:	2
Standard:	1.1.4. The approach and type of evaluation was suited to the purpose and scope of the evaluation TOR (or an internal evaluation proposal)
Comment and Analysis:	A design evaluation was proposed in the TOR which is relevant for the purpose and scope defined in the TOR as its purpose is to evaluate a policy or strategy to determine whether an intervention is designed effectively and efficiently to meet its stated objectives. The approach to be used was not clearly defined.
Rating:	3

Standard:	1.1.5. The TOR (or an internal evaluation proposal) identified the intended users of the evaluation and their information needs
Comment and Analysis:	Although not stated explicitly, the TOR indicates that the evaluation will assist DST in fulfilling its implementation responsibilities. It also states that the assessment will help the Hydrogen and Energy Directorate to assess and examine the design of the EGC and to identify gaps in policy and implementation.
Rating:	3

Standard:	1.1.6. Key stakeholders were involved in the scoping of the TOR and choosing the purpose of the evaluation
Comment and Analysis:	It was noted by interviewees that this evaluation was driven by the Chief Director of the Hydrogen and Energy Directorate within the DST and that there was limited stakeholder consultation in scoping of the TOR.
Rating:	2

1.2. Adequacy of resourcing

Standard:	1.2.1. The evaluation was adequately resourced in terms of time allocated
Comment and Analysis:	The initial time allocated for the evaluation was five weeks and this was inadequate given the scope of work. It was noted by interviewees that a more realistic time frame of four months was proposed by the service provider and then accepted by the DST at the project inception phase.
Rating:	3

Standard:	1.2.2. The evaluation was adequately resourced in terms of original budget
Comment and Analysis:	The budget for the evaluation was adequate given the scope of work. This was confirmed by the interviewees.
Rating:	4

Standard:	1.2.3. The evaluation was adequately resourced in terms of staffing and skills sets
Comment and Analysis:	This evaluation required a unique set of skills, all of which were well matched by the evaluation team including additional expertise which added value to overall study. This includes M&E expertise, including for science and technology; in-depth knowledge of the science and technology, industrial and environmental policy landscape locally and globally; experience in planning frameworks for uncertain and complex contexts; expertise in diagnosing policy alignment; very strong reporting, verbal and written communication skills.
Rating:	5

Standard:	1.2.4. Where appropriate, the evaluation planned to incorporate an element of capacity building of partners/staff responsible for the evaluation
Comment and Analysis:	Capacity building was not considered to be appropriate and was therefore not incorporated into the evaluation.
Rating:	N/A

1.3. Alignment to policy context and background literature

Standard: 1.3.1. There was evidence that a review of the relevant policy and programme environments had been conducted and used in planning the research

Comment and Analysis: A review of relevant policy and programme documents was included as part of the scope of work for this task. There is evidence in the inception report that a review was conducted of Ten Year Innovation Plan (TYIP) and the ERD&I strategy and implementation plan in order to inform the planning of the research.

Rating: 4

Standard: 1.3.2. There was evidence of a review of appropriate literature having been conducted and used in planning the research

Comment and Analysis: There is evidence in the inception report that a literature review was conducted when planning the research. A review of the references reveals that the literature was relevant to the evaluation as it is related to the themes of sustainable development and monitoring and evaluation in the sustainable development sector.

Rating: 4

1.4. Appropriateness of the evaluation design and methodology

Standard: 1.4.1. There was explicit reference to the intervention logic or the theory of change of the evaluand in the planning of the evaluation

Comment and Analysis: One of the key aspects of this design evaluation was to assess the intervention logic of the ERD&I strategy and its theoretical soundness, therefore it was explicitly referred to when planning the evaluation and evidence of this is contained in the inception report.

Rating: 4

Standard: 1.4.2. Key stakeholders were consulted on the design and methodology of the evaluation

Comment and Analysis: A project planning meeting was held with key stakeholders at the DST to discuss the scope of work, project design, methodology and time frames. In addition, the Deputy Director of M&E in the DST met with the relevant stakeholders internally and went to great lengths to explain the importance of the evaluation and to "sell the idea so that they would buy into it and look forward to the results". These stakeholders included all the programme staff within hydrogen and energy and some limited consultation with the CSIR.

Rating: 4

Standard:	1.4.3. The planned methodology was appropriate to the questions being asked
Comment and Analysis:	The planned methodology, includes a combination of document review, desktop study of international literature, and key informant interviews. This is appropriate to the questions being asked and responds well to the complex context of the local and global energy sector referred to in the TOR. The inception report goes further and maps out the planned methodology into five phases which includes the development of an assessment framework, assessment of the ERD&I strategy against the framework, assessing the analytical soundness of the ERD&I strategy, recommendations, and development of an M&E framework for the DIF.
Rating:	5
Standard:	1.4.4. Sampling was appropriate and adequate given focus and purpose of evaluation
Comment and Analysis:	The purpose of this evaluation was to develop an assessment framework against which the ERD&I strategy could be assessed and thus the focus was on conducting a review of secondary data. A small sample of seven key informants were purposively selected for interviews which was adequate and appropriate given the scope of this study.
Rating:	4
Standard:	1.4.5. There was a planned process for using the findings of the evaluation
Comment and Analysis:	Although it was not documented, it was agreed internally by DST programme staff that the findings would be used to revise and re-work the ERD&I strategy. Despite this, there was no clear plan at the time specifying how this process would be undertaken.
Rating:	2

1.5. Project management (Planning phase)

Standard:	1.5.1. The inception phase was used to develop a common agreement on how the evaluation would be implemented
Comment and Analysis:	It was noted by interviewees that, although the TOR appeared to be fairly well structured and clear, there was a disconnect between what was stated in the TOR and everyone's understanding of what was required. Thus much time was spent discussing both DST's and the Service Providers understanding of a 'design evaluation' and what this entails. An inception report was then produced after an initial planning meeting between DST stakeholders and the evaluation team and these processes ensured that a common agreement was developed on how the evaluation would be implemented.
Rating:	4

2. Implementation

2.1. Evaluation ethics and independence

Standard:	2.1.1. Where data was gathered in contexts where ethical sensitivity is high, appropriate clearance was achieved through an ethics review board; e.g. in evaluation involving minors, institutions where access usually requires ethical or bureaucratic clearance, and situations where assurances of confidentiality was offered to participants
Comment and Analysis:	The primary focus of this evaluation was the analysis of secondary data and therefore ethical sensitivity was not high. The small sample of stakeholders who were interviewed were offered anonymity and were not singled out in the report.
Rating:	4

Standard:	2.1.2. Where external, the evaluation team was able to work freely without significant interference
Comment and Analysis:	The evaluation team confirmed that they were able to work freely and without any interference from the DST.
Rating:	4

Standard:	2.1.3. The evaluation team was impartial and there was no evidence of conflict of interest
Comment and Analysis:	The evaluation team was impartial and there was no evidence of conflict of interest. It was noted that the DST was open to negative feedback about the strategy and therefore strongly encouraged the evaluation team to be as "open and frank" as possible in their reporting.
Rating:	4

2.2. Participation and M&E skills development

Standard:	2.2.1. Key stakeholders were consulted through a formalised mechanism or institutional arrangement
Comment and Analysis:	The evaluation team worked closely with the Deputy Director for M&E within the DST who spearheaded the evaluation process. According to interviewees there was ongoing consultation between the M&E Department and the H and E programme staff throughout the evaluation process, however, this consultation did not take place through a formalised internal mechanism.
Rating:	3

Standard:	2.2.2. Where appropriate, an element of capacity building of partners responsible for the evaluand was incorporated into the evaluation process
Comment and Analysis:	No capacity building processes were incorporated into the evaluation process as this was not deemed necessary or appropriate at the time. However, interviewees noted that government departments have virtually no experience in conducting design evaluations and this study could have been used as a good opportunity to learn from the experience and build capacity. Despite this the Deputy Director for M&E conducted sessions with programme staff in order to enhance their understanding of the importance of evaluations.
Rating:	2
Standard:	2.2.3. Where appropriate, the evaluation team incorporated an element of skills development amongst the evaluators (e.g. students, interns, recent graduates, etc)
Comment and Analysis:	No skills development was undertaken amongst evaluators.
Rating:	2
Standard:	2.2.4. Peer review of the agreed evaluation design and methodology occurred prior to undertaking data collection
Comment and Analysis:	There was no formal peer review system in place, however, the evaluation was conducted by a team of four to five experts and therefore informal peer review processes were undertaken throughout the task.
Rating:	3

2.3. Methodological integrity

Standard:	2.3.1. The methods employed in the process of the evaluation were consistent with those planned
Comment and Analysis:	The methodology which was followed by the evaluation team were consistent with those specified in the inception report.
Rating:	4
Standard:	2.3.2. A pilot of data collection instrumentation occurred prior to undertaking data collection
Comment and Analysis:	Since this was a design evaluation, the main focus on analysis of secondary information. However, a limited number of interviews were conducted with key informants and a questionnaire was designed for this purpose. Interviewees confirmed that this questionnaire was not piloted prior to conducting the interviews.
Rating:	2

Standard:	2.3.3. Data collection was not compromised by fieldwork-level problems or unplanned diversions from original intentions
Comment and Analysis:	Initially the gathering of documents proved to be challenging for the evaluation team as the the strategy and implementation plan were difficult to obtain from the department. With some persistence, however, these were eventually obtained. Another issue which impacted on the early stages of the evaluation process was that the project manager who initiated the evaluation left his position at the DST. This meant that much of the institutional memory and history of the EGC strategy left with him and this could have compromised the quality of findings to some degree. It was noted that the Deputy Director for M&E who took over the reigns was extremely supportive and committed to the process.
Rating:	3
Standard:	2.3.4. Forms of data gathering were appropriate given the scope of evaluation
Comment and Analysis:	Data gathering processes were appropriately undertaken. All the relevant strategy and programme documents were obtained directly from the DST and other relevant international documentation was obtained via a desktop review. Interviews were then conducted with key informants involved in development of the EGC strategy. This was critical to uncovering what their thinking was at the time the strategy was developed. Furthermore, it gave useful insight into the processes undertaken to develop the strategy; challenges experienced during the process; and all the other contextual issues which had an impact on the strategy development at the time.
Rating:	4
Standard:	2.3.5. The data analysis approach and methods were appropriate and sufficient given the purposes of the evaluation
Comment and Analysis:	Since this was a design evaluation, the focus was on the theory of change, inner logic and consistency of the programme. In order to achieve this, the evaluation team crafted a unique and innovative four-phase process which included: phase 1 - development of an assessment framework for the EGC; phase 2 - assessment of the ERD&I strategy document against the assessment framework; phase 3 - assessing the analytical soundness of the strategy; phase 4 - develop recommendations to improve the strategy. Interviewees agreed that this process worked well and, given that very few (if any) design evaluations have been conducted by the South African government to date, this process could serve as a useful model for future design evaluations.
Rating:	5
Standard:	2.3.6. Key stakeholders were significantly engaged as part of the methodology
Comment and Analysis:	With regards to collection of primary data, seven interviews were conducted with key informants within the DST. It was noted by interviewees that these key informants were carefully selected and considered to be "the right people to interview since they were responsible for drafting the strategy".
Rating:	4

Standard:	2.3.7. The methodology included engaging beneficiaries appropriately as a key source of data and information
Comment and Analysis:	This was a design evaluation and therefore engaging with beneficiaries directly as part of the design evaluation might not have been appropriate. However, the design of the strategy may certainly have benefited from comment of engagement with a representative of an organised formation or grouping associated with future beneficiaries.
Rating:	2

2.4. Project management (Implementation phase)

Standard:	2.4.1. The evaluation was conducted without significant shifts to scheduled project milestones and timeframes
Comment and Analysis:	There were no significant shifts to the scheduled milestones and timeframes.
Rating:	4

3. Report

3.1. Completeness of reporting structure

Standard:	3.1.1. Executive summary captures key components of the report appropriately
Comment and Analysis:	The executive summary captures all elements of the report succinctly including a brief introduction, summary of the literature review, key findings and recommendations.
Rating:	4
Standard:	3.1.2. The context of the development intervention is explicit and presented as relevant to the evaluation
Comment and Analysis:	The report goes beyond just presenting the role that the DST has to play in the energy space and the relevance of the EGC within the broader DST policy context. It also presents, the context for evaluations in South Africa to provide an understanding of how evaluations help to inform government activities, and the types of evaluations that are available.
Rating:	5
Standard:	3.1.3. There is a clear rationale for the evaluation questions
Comment and Analysis:	The report presents an assessment framework to interrogate the ERD&I strategy which includes six aspects which together determine how well the ERD&I meets the requirements of the guidelines in the National Evaluation Policy Framework. These include: relevance, clarity, context, effectiveness, efficiency, monitoring and evaluation. Each aspect is described in detail, with a clear rationale for each aspect followed by defining key evaluation questions that need to be answered to complete the assessment. The approach is innovative and this framework could be used again for future design assessments.
Rating:	5
Standard:	3.1.4. The scope or focus of the evaluation is apparent in the report
Comment and Analysis:	The scope and focus of the evaluation is stated up front in the introductory section of the report. It begins by providing a description of a design assessment as outlined in the National Evaluation Policy Framework (NEPF) and then indicates that the focus of the assessment is to assess the suitability of the current design of the ERD&I strategy, including the realisation of the Energy Grand Challenge.
Rating:	4

Standard:	3.1.5. A detailed methodology is outlined in the relevant section of the report to the point that a reader can understand the data collection, analysis and interpretation approaches used
Comment and Analysis:	Since this is a design evaluation, the method involves evaluating the inner logic and consistency of theory of change/logic model that forms the basis of the strategy. The study approach and methodology is presented in section 4 of the report which acknowledges that, since design assessments are relatively new in South Africa, the project team referred to best practice to guide the study design. The documents reviewed are presented followed by a summary of the approaches used in all the documents. This informed the design of the study and the methods used are clearly presented.
Rating:	4
Standard:	3.1.6. Acknowledgement of limitations of all aspects of the methodology and findings are clearly and succinctly articulated
Comment and Analysis:	It is acknowledged that design assessments are new in South Africa and that the evaluation team had no publicly available examples to assist with the design of the current assessment. Despite this, there is no clear acknowledgement or reflection on the limitations of the methodology which would have been useful given that this was one of the first of its kind in the South African context.
Rating:	2
Standard:	3.1.7. Key findings are presented in a clear way; they are made distinct from uncertain or speculative findings; and unused data is not presented in the body of the report
Comment and Analysis:	The Assessment Framework is applied to the ERD&I strategy in section 6 of the report and the findings are clearly presented according to each of the six aspects of the framework. Since the focus of the design evaluation was on assessment of the strategy document, this was the key source of data for the study therefore the issue of presenting unused data in the body of the report is not applicable.
Rating:	4
Standard:	3.1.8. Conclusions and recommendations are clear and succinctly articulated
Comment and Analysis:	The conclusions are clear and succinct. The recommendations for both the ERD&I strategy and the implementation plan are based on the conclusions and are well-constructed.
Rating:	4

3.2. Accessibility of content

Standard:	3.2.1. The final evaluation report is user-friendly, written in accessible language and its content follows a clear logic
Comment and Analysis:	Despite the highly specialised and technical nature of the content, the language used in the report is easy to understand making it accessible to the reader. The report is particularly well-structured because it takes the reader through the logical process of describing the ERD&I strategy, presenting the context, developing the Assessment Framework (including the rationale behind the framework), and then assessing the strategy based on the framework. The links between each section of the report are clearly articulated making it easy for the reader to follow the logical flow of the content.
Rating:	5
Standard:	3.2.2. Quality of writing and presentation is adequate for publication including: adequate layout and consistent formatting; complete sentences and no widespread grammatical or typographical errors; consistency of style and writing conventions (e.g. tense, perspective (first person, third person); levels of formality; references complete and consistent with cited references in reference list and vice versa; etc.
Comment and Analysis:	The quality of writing is good with only two grammatical errors noted throughout the report. The layout is adequate and formatting and numbering is consistent throughout. References are consistent and are all contained in reference list as an annex to the report.
Rating:	4
Standard:	3.2.3. Appropriate conventions are used in presentation of data (e.g. use of appropriate statistical language; reporting of p-values where appropriate; not reporting statistically insignificant findings as significant; clarifying disaggregation categories in constructing percentages; not using quantitative language in reporting qualitative data, etc.)
Comment and Analysis:	The report presents secondary data from research conducted into R&D in the energy sector and appropriate conventions are used in its presentation. For example the disaggregation categories for percentages and comparative data are clearly described.
Rating:	4
Standard:	3.2.4. The use of figures and tables is such that it supports communication and comprehension of results; and data reported in figures and tables are readily discernible and useful to a reader familiar with data presentation conventions
Comment and Analysis:	The report makes good use of tables and graphs to present secondary research data and this supports comprehension of findings. Figures are also used throughout the report to help the reader understand some of the more complex analyses such as the figure which helps to simplify how the four key drivers of the knowledge economy relate to the four R&D thrusts of the TYIP. Tables are also used for this purpose such as the table showing the alignment of the R&D themes of the EGC with those of the ERD&I. They are well-integrated into the report, labelled and accurately referred to.
Rating:	5

3.3. Robustness of findings

Standard:	3.3.1. Data analysis appears to have been well executed
Comment and Analysis:	A detailed desktop analysis of the content of the ERD&I strategy document and implementation plan was well executed on different levels.
Rating:	4
Standard:	3.3.2. Findings are supported by available evidence
Comment and Analysis:	All available evidence was used to support findings. The main evidence used was the design and content of the ERD&I strategy document. Further evidence was gathered through interviews with key informants in the DST which provided insights into the background and processes used to develop the strategy.
Rating:	4
Standard:	3.3.3. The evidence gathered is sufficiently and appropriately analysed to support the argument
Comment and Analysis:	The overall design and content of the ERD&I strategy and implementation plan was analysed on a number of levels. It was firstly analysed in terms of its alignment with the TYPIP; and was then assessed and analysed through the application of the Assessment Framework which provides a yardstick (based on international best practice) of the characteristics of 'good' strategy/policy. In addition it was assessed against international good practice to identify salient features of international strategies (and good practice) that provide an indication of whether the design of the ERDI&I strategy can be improved to increase its expected efficiency.
Rating:	5
Standard:	3.3.4. There is appropriate recognition of the possibility of alternative interpretations
Comment and Analysis:	Since the key focus of the evaluation was the content of the ERD&I strategy, there was little scope for considering alternative interpretations of findings. However, the evidence gathered from key informants was sometimes used to provide alternative interpretations in the report.
Rating:	3
Standard:	3.3.5. The report appears free of significant methodological and analytic flaws
Comment and Analysis:	The report appears free of significant methodological and analytic flaws.
Rating:	4
Standard:	3.3.6. Relevant limitations of the evaluation are noted
Comment and Analysis:	Besides acknowledging that there are few studies of this kind available, the limitations of the evaluation are not clearly noted in the report.
Rating:	2

3.4. Strength of conclusions

Standard:	3.4.1. Conclusions are derived from evidence
Comment and Analysis:	The main conclusion of the study is that there are a number of limitations of the ERD&I strategy, and the strategy is suggested not to be clear enough to help guide implementation of DST energy RD&I activities. This conclusion is derived mainly from the assessment of the relevance, clarity, context, effectiveness, efficiency and monitoring and evaluation aspects of the strategy as stipulated in the Assessment Framework; evidence from literature review of best practices; and evidence derived from key informant interviews.
Rating:	4
Standard:	3.4.2. Conclusions take into account relevant empirical and/or analytic work from related research studies and evaluations
Comment and Analysis:	The conclusions take into account the findings from the literature review which identified a strong role for DST in improving South Africa's performance with respect to supporting energy-related RD&I - based on the small amount of data available in the open literature and suggests poor performance in this regards. It is worth noting that there is a paucity of design evaluations having been conducted in South Africa making it difficult for the evaluation team to make reference to these.
Rating:	4
Standard:	3.4.3. Conclusions address the original evaluation purpose and questions
Comment and Analysis:	Throughout the assessment of the strategy the original evaluation questions are stated upfront for each element of the framework (relevance, clarity, context, effectiveness, efficiency, M&E) and the concluding summary explicitly addresses these questions. The evaluation purpose is revisited in the concluding summary of the report.
Rating:	4
Standard:	3.4.4. Conclusions are drawn with explicit reference to the intervention logic or theory of change
Comment and Analysis:	A key element of a design evaluation involves the interrogation of the intervention logic or theory of change. A major finding of the ERD&I strategy review is that it lacks a clear logic model and thus concludes that there is no guidance as to what the DST is trying to achieve at a practical level, or how it would go about achieving this.
Rating:	4

3.5. Suitability of recommendations

Standard:	3.5.1. Recommendations are made in consultation with appropriate sectoral partners or experts
Comment and Analysis:	Although sectoral partners were not consulted, the members of the evaluation team are considered experts in the sector and would thus have given substantial input into the recommendations based on the outcomes of the study.
Rating:	3
Standard:	3.5.2. Recommendations are shaped following discussions with relevant government officials and other relevant stakeholders
Comment and Analysis:	An internal workshop was held to sense-check the findings and formulate conclusions and recommendations. This workshop was held with the relevant DST stakeholders including those from programme implementation and management levels. However, other stakeholders from relevant government departments who are also responsible for driving the Energy RD&I policy, such as Department of Trade and Industry, were not included in shaping recommendations.
Rating:	3
Standard:	3.5.3. Recommendations are relevant to the current policy context
Comment and Analysis:	The key overall recommendation is that the DST should consider redeveloping the ERD&I strategy and its associated implementation framework. This is relevant to the current policy context since the purpose of the ERD&I strategy is to support the realisation of the Energy Grand Challenge as articulated in TYIP which aims to support the White Paper on Science and Technology and other policy documents.
Rating:	4
Standard:	3.5.4. Recommendations are targetted at a specific audience sufficiently - are specific, feasible, affordable and acceptable
Comment and Analysis:	The recommendations are addressed specifically to the DST. They give step-by-step details on how the strategy redevelopment process should be undertaken including the need to gather detailed baseline information. Whilst it is acknowledged that this could be a costly and time-consuming exercise, the authors note that, without baseline data it will be impossible to properly measure the success of the strategy and consequently refine and improve the strategy in future.
Rating:	4

3.6. Consideration of reporting risks and ethical implications

Standard: 3.6.1. Peer review of the draft evaluation report occurred prior to finalisation of the evaluation report

Comment and Analysis: An informal peer review of the draft report occurred prior to finalisation of the evaluation report. The three members of the evaluation team who wrote the report reviewed each others' content; and the DST reviewed the draft report before finalisation.

Rating: 3

Standard: 3.6.2. The full report documents procedures intended to ensure confidentiality and to secure informed consent where necessary (in some cases this is not needed - e.g. evaluation synthesis - in which case N/A should be recorded)

Comment and Analysis: Although the primary focus of this evaluation was a desktop analysis, some interviews were conducted with key informants at the DST and their names are listed in appendix A of the report. However, in order to protect the anonymity of the interviewees, no individual was singled out in the report.

Rating: 4

Standard: 3.6.3. There are no risks to participants in disseminating the original report on a public website

Comment and Analysis: Although the report is not available on the public website the DST interviewee confirmed that there will be no risks to the participants in disseminating the report on a public website.

Rating: 4

Standard: 3.6.4. There are no unfair risks to institutions in disseminating the original report on a public website

Comment and Analysis: The DST has given permission for the report to be uploaded on the DPME website thereby indicating that there is not fear of unfair risk to the DST in disseminating the report on a public website.

Rating: 4

3.7. Project management (Reporting phase)

Standard: 3.7.1. A project closure meeting that reflected on the challenges and strengths of the evaluation process occurred

Comment and Analysis: There is no evidence of a project closure meeting taking place either by the evaluation team or the DST in order to reflect on the strengths and challenges of the evaluation process.

Rating: 1

4. Follow-up, use and learning

4.1. Resource utilisation

Standard:	4.1.1. The evaluation was completed within the planned timeframes
Comment and Analysis:	Initially the DST requested that the evaluation team complete the task within five to six weeks, however, a more realistic timeframe of four months was negotiated and the evaluation was completed within this time period.
Rating:	4
Standard:	4.1.2. The evaluation was completed within the agreed budget
Comment and Analysis:	The evaluation was completed within the agreed budget.
Rating:	4

4.2. Evaluation use

Standard:	4.2.1. Results of the evaluation have been presented to all relevant stakeholders
Comment and Analysis:	The report was distributed internally in the DST and this was followed by an internal workshop where the findings were presented to key stakeholders including the H&E programme staff. The report was then approved by the Operational Committee and the Executive Committee.
Rating:	4
Standard:	4.2.2. A reflective process has been undertaken by the steering committee (if no steering committee exists then by the evaluation management team or the involved department officials) to reflect on what could be done to strengthen future evaluations
Comment and Analysis:	Since the evaluation was lead by one person in the DST, no reflection process was undertaken to discuss ways to strengthen future evaluations. This would have been useful particularly since a design evaluation was the first of its kind undertaken by the department.
Rating:	2
Standard:	4.2.3. The evaluation study is seen by interviewed stakeholders as having added significant symbolic value to the policy or programme (e.g. raised its profile)
Comment and Analysis:	The evaluation study was viewed by the DST interviewee as an internal process as it involved reviewing the design of the ERD&I strategy. It was noted that this study raised the profile of the strategy within the department and gave staff members an opportunity to reflect on the relevance and importance of a good strategy to implement policy objectives.
Rating:	3

Standard:	4.2.4. The evaluation study is of conceptual value in understanding what has happened and possibly in shaping policy and practice
Comment and Analysis:	It was noted by the DST interviewee that there have been shifts in planning processes within the department as a result of this design evaluation. Staff have an improved understanding of the importance of planning properly - not only for the ERD&I strategy but for all strategies. For example, they are reportedly more aware of the importance of aligning a strategy with both internal and other energy related policies; and they also understand the importance of benchmarking with practice in other countries.
Rating:	4
Standard:	4.2.5. Development of a draft improvement plan has been started, but not completed, based on the findings and recommendations set out in the evaluation
Comment and Analysis:	Not applicable
Rating:	N/A
Standard:	4.2.6. The report is publicly available (website or otherwise published document), except where there were legitimate security concerns *Note: only apply if sufficient time has elapsed since completion of the evaluation
Comment and Analysis:	The report has not been made publicly available to date, probably because the evaluation, which involved revisiting the design of the ERD&I strategy was viewed by DST stakeholders as being an internal process. The DST interviewee has indicated the report will now become publicly available through the Presidency website as part of this assessment. There are no legitimate security concerns.
Rating:	3
Standard:	4.2.7. There is clear evidence of instrumental use - that the recommendations of the evaluation were implemented to a significant extent *Note: only apply if sufficient time has elapsed since completion of the evaluation
Comment and Analysis:	In line with the main recommendation of the evaluation, which was to re-design the ERD&I strategy and implementation plan, the DST has recently undertaken to re-draft the strategy. The DST interviewee confirmed that the recommendations made in the report are being used as part of the re-drafting process. For example efforts are being made to ensure that the strategy is aligned to key policy documents.
Rating:	4
Standard:	4.2.8. There is clear evidence that the evaluation has had a positive influence on the evaluand, its stakeholders and beneficiaries over the medium to long term *Note: only apply if sufficient time has elapsed since completion of the evaluation
Comment and Analysis:	Since the DST has only recently begun to review the ERD&I strategy it is too early to determine whether the evaluation had a positive influence on key stakeholders over the medium term.
Rating:	N/A

References

Cohen B., 2011. "Proposal for Independent Design Assessment of the Energy Grand Challenge, 17 November 2011", The Green House and DNA Economics.

Cohen B., 2012. "Inception report for Review of the Energy Grand Challenge, Final Version, 5 March 2012", The Green House

South African Department of Science and Technology, 2011. "Terms of Reference for Independent Design Assessment of the Energy Grand Challenge"

Cohen B., Cloete B., Glaser R., 2012. "Independent Design Assessment of the Energy Research Development and Innovation (ERD&I) Strategy, Final Report", The Green House and DNA Economics

List of Interviewees

Brett Cohen, Project Manager, The Green House, face to face interview, 29 November 2013

Nozipho Ntuli, Deputy Director of M&E, DST, telephonic interview, 6 December 2013